

Cascade Center Project Narrative
SPEX 2006-0025 / ZMAP 2006-0025 / ZMOD 2006-



Location:

The submissions identified above represent an office development formed by five parcels. This project is located at the northwest quadrant of the intersection of Cascades Parkway (Route 637) and Maries Road (Route 638), which is in the Sterling Community of the Suburban Policy Area.

Properties:

Parcel ID	Lot	Acreage	Zoning	Zoning Conversion
30-10-5763	7	.92	1993 PD-IP	1993 Revised ZO (PD-IP)
30-10-5763	8	.92	1993 PD-IP	1993 Revised ZO (PD-IP)
30-10-5987	9	.83	1972 PD-IP	1993 Revised ZO (PD-IP)
30-10-7090	10	1.00	1972 PD-IP	1993 Revised ZO (PD-IP)
10-10-4490	7A	1.61	1972 PD-IP	1993 Revised ZO (PD-IP)
Total Acreage:		5.28		

Project Narrative:

According to the Planned Land Use map on page 7-23 of the General Plan, this geographic area is designated for Keynote Employment, which uses "are defined as large-scale regional office developments that feature high visual quality and high trip-generating uses, including office parks..." There are three submissions in the following package.

1. Special Exception (SPEX 2006-0031)
 - a. The Special Exception being submitted is for an office use in a PD-IP zone.
2. A Zoning Map Amendment (ZMAP 2006-0025) as outlined in the pre-application conference on April 26, 2005, (PRAP 2005-0049)
 - a. The Zoning Map Amendment requests a conversion of five existing PD-IP parcels (as defined under the 1993 Revised Zoning Ordinance)
3. Modification of Zoning
 - a. A request to waive the requirement for a side yard buffer between two similarly zoned PD-IP properties.
 - b. A request to allow access to a major collector (Cascades Parkway) for an individual parcel that will provide an access easement to the south adjacent parcel.

Please accept this submission as a special exception, a zoning application for the conversion of five parcels to 1993 revised Zoning Ordinance, and a modification of zoning for two aspects of the development.

DRAFT

I. STATEMENTS OF JUSTIFICATION (ZMOD)

The following narrative addresses the **Statements of Justification** for a Zoning Ordinance Modification for the property affected by SPEX 2006-0031 and ZMAP 2006-0025, as per the project narrative.

1. Zoning Ordinance Requirement to be Modified: Section 5-1414(A)

The following portion of Section 5-1414(A) indicates the types of buffer yards required based on the proposed use of the subject property and the existing use of adjacent parcels. The proposed use for the subject property is "Office," placing it within Proposed Land Use Group 6. The adjacent parcel (PIN# 030-10-1437) applicable to this request for a Zoning Ordinance Modification is classified as Adjacent Land Use Group 10-12 (due to its nature as a currently vacant lot zoned PD-IP with industrial uses), and therefore the buffer yard requirement is Type 4.

<i>Proposed Land Use Groups</i>	<i>Adjacent Land Use Groups</i>												
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Group 6</i> <i>Financial Institution</i> <i>Office</i> <i>Business Service Establishment</i> <i>Retail Sales Establishment</i> <i>Health & Fitness Center</i> <i>Funeral Home, Mortuary, Creatory</i> <i>Personal Service Establishment</i>													
	2	2	2	2	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	3	4	4	4	N/A
										PD-IP Industrial Uses			

Type 4 buffer yard requirements, Section 5-1414B(4):

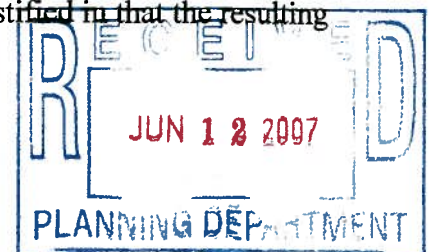
<i>SIDE YARD BUFFER WIDTH</i>	<i>REQUIRED PLANT UNITS PER 100 LINEAL FEET</i>
<i>20' minimum</i>	<i>2 Canopy Tree(s)</i>
	<i>3 Understory Trees</i>
	<i>25 Shrubs</i>
	<i>6 Evergreen Trees</i>

Proposed Modification

Eliminate the Type 4 buffer yard requirement between an adjacent lot and the subject property.

Justification

The proposed elimination of the Type 4 buffer yard requirement is justified in that the resulting proposed design will complement existing uses.



As outlined in Section 5-1409 of the Loudoun County Zoning Ordinance, *“The Zoning Administrator may waive, reduce and/or modify buffer yard requirements for side and rear yards where lots zoned MR-HI, GB, PD-IP, PD-GI, MR-HI or CLI abut, upon finding that such waiver, reduction and/or modification is designed to complement proposed development of existing or proposed uses. In any case, a screen wall of a minimum six (6) foot in height or buffer yard shall be constructed where such side or rear yard is visible from the public right-of-way.”*

The adjacent property and the proposed development are each zoned PD-IP, and our proposal does complement keynote employment uses proposed by and consistent with the general plan.

2. Zoning Ordinance Requirement to be Modified: Section 4-507(G)(1)

“(G) Development Setback and Access from Major Roads. In designing an industrial park development, the following requirements shall be observed:

(1) Access. No individual lots or housing unit created after adoption of this Ordinance shall have direct access to an arterial or major collector road. Notwithstanding the foregoing, schools shall be permitted emergency access to an arterial or major collector road.”

Proposed Modification

Allow for “right in, right out” access to the parcel from Cascades Parkway (a major collector).

Justification

The proposed entrance to the parcel and consequent Zoning Ordinance Modification is justified because the single parcel being served by the entrance from Cascades property is a consolidation of existing parcels, and therefore a consolidation of access points. Furthermore, an easement is proposed to provide access to parcels south of the subject property, allowing the access point to Cascades Parkway to serve multiple parcels, as opposed to the individual subject property.

I. STATEMENTS OF JUSTIFICATION (SPEX 2006-0031 and ZMAP 2006-0025)

The following narrative addresses the Statements of Justification for SPEX 2006-0031 and ZMAP 2006-0025.

SPEX 2006-0031

Issues for Consideration

(From Section 6-1310 of the Loudoun County Zoning Ordinance)



(A) Whether the proposed special exception is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan

The special exception request for this Project is for an office use in a PD-IP zone. This Project or site is located at the intersection of Cascades Parkway (Route 637) and Maries Road (Route 638) which is in the Sterling Community of the Suburban Policy Area. According to the Planned Land Use map on page 7-23 of the General Plan, this geographic area is designated for Keynote Employment. "Keynote Employment uses are defined as large-scale regional office developments that feature high visual quality and high trip-generating uses, including office Parks" Our Project "will be a single use with the ancillary services necessary to support the predominant office use". If we can achieve a 0.4 FAR, our gross square feet of office space would be approximately 91,800 square feet. The General Plan refers to large-scale office development as being 40,000 square feet or greater. In summary, our Project is fully consistent with the County's Comprehensive Plan.

(B) Whether the proposed special exception will adequately provide for safety from fire hazards and have effective measures of fire control.

The site plan will incorporate fire lanes and designated parking to enhance the access of fire and rescue vehicles at the site. Fire hydrants will be installed as required by the County's facilities standards manual. Also, the office buildings will be designed to incorporate the required non-combustible construction as well as emergency exits, fire alarm systems and fire extinguishers.

(C) Whether the level and impact of any noise emanating from the site, including that generated by the proposed use, negatively impacts the uses in the immediate area.

The proposed use for the site is office buildings (condominiums). We do not expect to have any recurring noises at the site for this use. The surrounding uses are also office type activities.

(D) Whether the glare or light that may be generated by the proposed use negatively impacts uses in the immediate area.

It is planned that the parking lot will have outdoor lights and outdoor lights will be on the buildings. The parking lot lighting will be designed to minimize glare to other properties; however, this site is on a well-traveled, well lighted Cascades Parkway. Other adjacent developed sites are now lighted at night in a very similar manner to that which we plan.

(E) Whether the proposed use is compatible with other existing or proposed uses in the neighborhood, and adjacent parcels.

The adjacent parcels are also zoned PD-IP and those that are currently developed are either an office use or office/warehouse use. The Claude Moore Park across Cascades Parkway from the subject site is not developed but is wooded along its length with Cascades Parkway. Claude Moore Park will most likely stay in its present wooded condition, at least along Cascades Parkway.

(F) Whether (there is) sufficient existing or proposed landscaping, screening and buffering on the site and in the neighborhood to adequately screen surrounding uses.

The subject site is currently heavily wooded with a medium sized stand of mostly eastern red cedars. Most to all of the current woods, however, will be lost to required grading and earthwork activities during the construction phase. The site plan will incorporate new screening and buffering landscaping along the site's perimeter as approved by the County in its site plan review.

(G) Whether the proposed special exception will result in the preservation of any topographic or physical, natural, scenic, archaeological or historic feature of significant importance.

Several visual inspections of the site, limited earth sampling and inquiries with local historic preservation groups have not revealed the presence of any type of historic or archaeological finds at the site. The site is also relatively level and is approximately level with the surrounding parcels. It appears that the site most likely was cleared and used as farmland until it fell into disuse in recent years.

(H) Whether the proposed special exception will damage existing animal habitat, vegetation, water quality (including groundwater) or air quality.

Loss of the present groundcover during construction and development of the site will remove any temporary habitat that may currently be used by small animals and deer. However, the visual site inspections did not reveal the presence of any resident animals on the site. Most to all of the current vegetation will be lost to required construction activities. Development of the site is not expected to damage the groundwater or air quality.

(I) Whether the proposed special exception at the specified location will contribute to or promote the welfare or convenience of the public.

The subject site is ideally located in a predominately developed commercial and residential area of Sterling. It is also located on a major four-lane Cascades Parkway at the intersection of Cascades Parkway and Maries Road, which will be a signalized intersection. As such, the site and its several business activities will be close and convenient to area residents and other businesses. The site could also be a close, easy commute for owners or employees of businesses located here.

(J) Whether the traffic expected to be generated by the proposed use will be adequately and safely served by roads, pedestrian connections and other transportation services.

A traffic study, proposed as part of our Special Exception application, will provide a more definitive answer to this question. However, a familiarity with the area and its recent intense development should provide some qualitative answers to this question. The road network in the area has recently undergone considerable improvements, including Cascades Parkway being built to a four-lane partially divided highway, completion of Nokes Boulevard to Route 28 and several other new roads in and around the Dulles Town Center. Except for Route 7 during rush hours, these new and recently improved roads are currently only lightly trafficked. At the same time, this Project is of very limited scope in a traffic sense and will generate only a minimal amount of additional traffic on area roads.

No pedestrian connections or other transportation services are known to exist in this suburban area.

(K) Whether, in the case of existing structures proposed to be converted to uses requiring a special exception, the structures meet all code requirements of Loudoun County.

The site is a vacant 5.27 acre parcel of land with no existing structures other than sewer and water mains located along the property line with Maries Road and curb and gutter along the frontage with Cascades Parkway. The sewer and water facilities are currently a part of the Loudoun County Sanitation Authority (LCSA) network in the County and Cascades Parkway is in the Virginia Department of Transportation state maintenance system.

(L) Whether the proposed special exception will be served adequately by essential public facilities and services.

There is an existing manhole on the property as part of the existing sewer facilities. New sewer services will most likely tie into this manhole, which is located at the northwest corner of the property along Maries Road. Water services can be provided from existing water mains on the site; however, the LCSA currently has plans to extend a 10 inch watermain along Cascades Parkway which will tie-in to the existing waterlines on the property. LCSA will probably want the water service for this project to lateral off of its new 10 inch line. This LCSA project is intended to provide sewer and water services to all of the other parcels in the Tall Oaks Subdivision and along Cascades Parkway. The five parcels which make up this site, however, are not a part of this LCSA project since water and sewer are already on the property. Power and telephone lines currently run along the front of the site and are available.

(M) The effect of the proposed special exception on groundwater supply

The groundwater supply is not expected to be affected. Nothing is planned during construction of the Project that would reasonably have any effect.. Development of the site will include storm water detention facilities, but storm water is surface water and not groundwater, unless rock fissures in the soil allowed storm water to leach into the ground.

(N) Whether the proposed use will affect the structural capacity of the soils.

Nothing about the design of the Project or in its construction is expected to have any affect on the soils structural bearing quality. Preliminary soil borings indicate that the site is composed of fractured shale at normal footings depths, which is thought to be generally consistent with the immediate area. This subsoil condition is expected to provide good bearing quality for the office buildings.

(O) Whether the proposed use will negatively impact orderly and safe road development and transportation.

. It is under consideration to making a pro rate contribution to the signalization of the intersection of Maries Road and Cascades Parkway. Additionally, we have proposed a right turn in and out access to Cascades Parkway which would enhance the traffic flow from our site and simultaneously alleviate the traffic flow at the new signal.

(P) Whether the proposed special exception use will provide desirable employment and enlarge the tax base by encouraging economic development activities consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

Using a FAR of 0.4 as a guide, this ratio equates to approximately 91,800. square feet of office use space for the Project. If the space is divided into offices (condominiums) of 1,000 square feet, the space yield would be about 90 offices. If each office employs 2 to 3 people, then 180 to 270 employees would occupy the Project on a daily basis. On the basis of this analysis, the Project would be expected to create 180 to 270 new jobs in the County. The predominant tax base consideration derives from the value of the real estate on the site for the 90 office condos. Office condominium developments in the County are currently assessed for taxes at about \$275.00 per square feet for Class A space. For a 90,000 square foot project, the total valuation for real estate taxes would then be \$24,750,000. At the current (CY 2005)tax rate of \$1.04 per \$100. of valuation, this would equate to an increase in the County's tax base of \$257,400.00 on an annual basis.

(Q) Whether the proposed special exception considers the need of agriculture, industry, and businesses in future growth.

The office use activity for this Project will support the existing and future local business community by providing additional business activities that enhance and complement the other businesses in the community.

(R) Whether adequate on and off-site infrastructure is available.

I believe that this question has been substantially answered by the answers provided to previous questions, particularly Question L .

- (S) **Any anticipated odors which may be generated by the uses on site, and which may negatively impact adjacent uses.**

If a small, food serving café is allowed as a part of the uses in this Project, there may be miscellaneous odors from food being cooked. Such odors are expected to be minor and should not have any impact on adjacent properties and their uses. It is not expected that any other activities in the condominiums would generate any odors.

- (T) **Whether the proposed special exception uses sufficient measure to mitigate the impact of construction traffic on existing neighborhoods and school areas.**

All construction traffic generated by this Project is expected to use the existing arteries leading directly to the Site. There is no need for construction traffic to enter any local residential neighborhoods. Only the Sterling Elementary School on Church Road and the Sterling Middle School on Sterling Boulevard could be expected to experience any construction traffic generated by this Project, since both schools are located on local artery roads. Any impact on the Sterling Elementary School should be negligible since this part of Church Road is only a secondary artery road used mostly by local traffic. The Sterling Middle School borders Sterling Boulevard which is a main local artery, but it is not believed that the Sterling Middle School is located close enough to our Project to be impacted by our construction traffic.

ZMAP 2006-0025 (Conversion)

Issues for Consideration

(From Section 6-1211 (E) of the Loudoun County Zoning Ordinance)

- (1) Whether the proposed zoning district classification is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

Our ZMAP application is a conversion of all five (5) parcels of existing PD-IP under the 1993 revised zoning ordinance. The County has established a policy to bring land parcels in the Route 28 taxing district into the 1993 revised zoning ordinance. It appears to us that our request to zone all parcels to the revised 1993 ordinance is consistent with the County's Comprehensive Plan.

- (2) Whether there are any changed or changing conditions in the area affected that make the proposed rezoning appropriate.

This geographic area is undergoing almost constant and intensive business and residential development. Our project fits well with development in the area and would supplement

the other development that is and has taken place. This conversion is from the 1993 Zoning Ordinance to the 1993 revised Zoning Ordinance. The PD-IP zone is not being changed.

- (3) Whether the range of uses in the proposed zoning district classification are compatible with uses permitted on other property in the immediate vicinity.

I believe this question was essentially answered in Question #2. A review of the permitted uses allowed under the revised 1993 ordinance supplement the area's residential and business development. It would also allow added employment opportunities to the many people who now live in this area.

- (4) Whether adequate utility, sewer and water, transportation, school and other facilities exist or can be provided to serve the uses that would be permitted on the property if it were rezoned.

All utilities needed for this project are on the property. With the advantage of having already received comments from the LCSA, adequate sewer and water facilities are available. Power and telephone lines either traverse the property or are very nearby. Since this is an office use type of development, there would be no impact on the local school facilities. From a transportation consideration, there would be additional traffic generated as we have defined in our required traffic analysis conducted by MCV Associates.

- (5) The effect of the proposed rezoning on the County's ground water supply.**

The development of our property is not expected to have any direct effect on the local ground water supply, or if there is, it probably would not be measurable. However, there is some rationale that the greater run-off of rain water stored in the storm water management facilities would enhance the ground water supply. There are no water wells or other ground water extractions in our proposed development that would effect the ground water table.

- (6) The effect of uses allowed by the proposed rezoning on the structural capacity of the soils.**

We would not be doing any activity that would change the structural capacity of the soils. The two buildings planned for this development will rest at designated depths on soil, but the footings will be designed to carry the buildings weight, given the soil bearing capacity.

- (7) **The impact that the uses that would be permitted if the property were rezoned will have upon the volume of vehicular and pedestrian traffic and traffic safety in the vicinity and whether the proposed rezoning uses sufficient measures to mitigate the impact of through construction traffic on existing neighborhoods and school areas.**

For an answer to this question, please refer to our traffic analysis and study conducted by MCV Associates for this site. MCV Associates is a professional engineering firm that specializes in conducting traffic studies. Additionally, our site is located on Cascades Parkway, a local major artery which connects directly with other major arteries serving the area. So construction traffic is not expected to tranverse local neighborhoods. All construction traffic generated by this Project is expected to use the existing arteries leading directly to the Site. There is no need for construction traffic to enter any local residential neighborhoods. Only the Sterling Elementary School on Church Road and the Sterling Middle School on Sterling Boulevard could be expected to experience any construction traffic generated by this Project, since both schools are located on local artery roads. Any impact on the Sterling Elementary School should be negligible since this part of Church Road is only a secondary artery road used mostly by local traffic. The Sterling Middle School borders Sterling Boulevard which is a main local artery, but it is not believed that the Sterling Middle School is located close enough to our Project to be impacted by our construction traffic.

- (8) **Whether a reasonably viable economic use of the subject property exists under the current zoning.**

This conversion from 1993 Zoning Ordinance to 1993 Zoning Ordinance does not change the PD-IP zone. As per the General Plan, this property is designated as Keynote Employment.

- (9) **The effect of the proposed rezoning on the environment or natural features, wildlife habitat, vegetation, water quality and air quality.**

a. Environment or natural features: The effects on these features are expected to be minimal; however, the small loss of this wooded site to a developed site is certainly a loss of vegetation and loss of carbon dioxide absorbing trees.

b. Wildlife habitat: Again, the loss of vegetation on this site due to its development is a loss of habitat for local wildlife. Several visits to the site, however, have not identified any permanent residents on the site.

c. Vegetation: The site is currently heavily wooded with premature stands of eastern red cedar and Virginia pine, along with several other species. As per ERT's recommendation

#3 dated February 5, 2007, existing forest cover is "fair to poor" and will not be retained.

d. Water quality: Compared to run-off or absorption of rainfall in its undeveloped state, the run-off of rainfall when developed would probably contain a higher quantity of hydrocarbons from auto emissions, etc.

e. Air Quality: Air quality is not expected to be affected once this site is developed. During the construction phase, the creation of dust would affect air quality.

(10) Whether the proposed rezoning encourages economic development activities in areas designated by the Comprehensive Plan and provides desirable employment and enlarges the tax base.

This conversion does not change the existing PD-IP zone. Jobs are expected to be created by this development, which will increase the local demand for business services facilities and housing, and encourage economic development activities.

(11) Whether the proposed rezoning considers the needs of agriculture, industry, and businesses in future growth.

The office use activity for this project will support the existing and future local business community by providing additional business activities that enhance and complement the other businesses in the community.

(12) Whether the proposed rezoning considers the current and future requirements of the community as to land for various purposes as determined by population and economic studies.

The Zoning conversion from PD-IP 1993 Zoning Ordinance to PD-IP 1993 revised Zoning Ordinance does consider current and future requirements of the community. The Comprehensive Plan's designation of this site is for Keynote employment. The proposed office use, supports the Keynote Employment designated land use and the site design.

(13) Whether the proposed rezoning encourages the conservation of properties and their values and the encouragement of the most appropriate use of land throughout the County.

Our project is planned to be an office condominium project which will provide jobs and business services to the community. As such, these activities do encourage the conservation of properties and their values. Also, we believe that the highest and best use

of our land is to use it as an office use.

- (14) Whether the proposed rezoning considers trends of growth or changes, employment, and economic factors, the need for housing, probable future economic and population growth of the County and the capacity of existing and/or planned public facilities and infrastructure.**

Indirectly, I believe that we do address these items by virtue of our office use project being compatible with the local business community and the local residential areas. As to future economic and population growth, our project should provide from 180 to 270 new jobs in the local community. The existing infrastructure and that planned for the area is believed to be adequate for this project.

- (15) The effect of the proposed rezoning to provide moderate housing by enhancing opportunities for all qualified residents of Loudoun County.**

The jobs to be created by this project will include a cross-section of skills and experiences, from professionals such as attorneys and physicians to janitors and maintenance personnel

- (16) The effect of the rezoning on natural, scenic, archaeological or historic features of significant importance.**

When our project is developed and in daily use, an increase in activity in the immediate area will draw more attention to the Claude Moore Park, whose main entrance is directly across the street. This change could result in increased interest and use of the Claude Moore Park facilities.